

Frequently Asked Questions

As of June 8, 2007

Why did you develop the Lake Berryessa Visitor Services Plan (VSP)?

Seven concessionaires at Lake Berryessa have contracts with the Federal Government to provide services to visitors. The contracts were first developed in the 1950s and reflect the needs of the public at that time. Reclamation's goal was to bring the lake's recreation services into the 21st century.

Six of the concessionaires' contracts expire in 2008/2009; Pleasure Cove Marina's interim contract expires in December 2007. In the Record of Decision (ROD), released on June 6, 2006, Reclamation identified new directions for future commercial services and facilities at Lake Berryessa. In the last 40+ years, population growth has resulted in more competition for public recreation areas, yet due to urban sprawl, fewer such areas exist. Furthermore, more restrictive environmental laws and regulations are impacting the design and construction of recreation facilities. Reclamation needed to address issues at the lake such as potable water, human and solid waste removal, erosion due to channeling runoff, hazardous materials management, public health and safety, the Americans with Disabilities Act, air quality, natural resources management, and endangered species issues.

Since the 1950s, a form of exclusive long-term residential use evolved at the lake. Over the years, approximately 1,500 trailers were placed by their owners on sites assigned by concessionaires. The trailers have since been sold onsite, passed on to heirs, or replaced. Many of the trailer owners constructed storage areas, docks, retaining walls, and other permanent structures. Some of the trailer owners now live at the lake. Reclamation needed to address health and safety codes at the concessions as well as the appropriateness of exclusive use of public lands by private citizens.

What kind of environmental studies were done?

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was completed. The Draft EIS was released in October 2003 and the Final EIS was released in November 2005. The ROD was released on June 6, 2006.

Who made the final decision on what happens at Lake Berryessa?

Reclamation made the decision on the best ways to improve the services offered to lake visitors. Long-term permittees, concession owners, the public, local elected officials, and other interested individuals and groups had several opportunities to provide comments and suggestions. The ROD was signed by the Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are you really going to close all of the resorts?

Concession operations will continue to be located in the areas currently known as Markley Cove, Pleasure Cove Marina, Steele Park, Spanish Flat, Lake Berryessa Marina, Rancho Monticello, and Putah Creek. The next term of contracts will be determined by a competitive bid process. Existing concessionaires may be part of the bid mix if they wish to continue operating at Lake Berryessa. If they do wish to remain involved, they will be required to compete and provide a responsive bid to the new operations identified by Reclamation. The concessionaires' current contracts expire as follows:

Pleasure Cove Marina - 12/1/07
Rancho Monticello - 6/15/08
Spanish Flat - 7/13/08
Lake Berryessa Marina - 8/13/08
Putah Creek - 8/13/08
Markley Cove - 5/26/09
Steele Park - 5/26/09

I've heard that the trailers/mobile homes probably won't really have to be removed for at least 5-10 more years, if ever. Is that true?

All of the concession contracts are going to expire on the dates listed above, and pursuant to the Record of Decision dated June 2, 2006, all privately owned property must be removed by the expiration dates listed above.

What types of legal rights, privileges, and property ownership do the concessionaires have?

The concessionaires are contractors to the Government, and they provide certain types of services to the public at Lake Berryessa. They do not own the land upon which they conduct business; it is simply assigned to them for their use during the term of their contracts. They have no preferential right of renewal and must compete with other interested parties following expiration of their contracts. They do have certain rights for compensation for facilities they have developed which are designated to remain in any new contract term.

What happens after the concessionaires' contracts expire?

In early June 2007, Reclamation will release a prospectus for new concession contract(s). The prospectus is a detailed, formal application so that anyone interested in running a concession operation can make a bid on a concession area(s). The new concession(s) will be very different from the existing ones. When the existing concession contracts expire, any rental agreements the concessionaires had with the permittees will also expire. Permittees who own trailers/mobile homes and other property such as decks, storage sheds, etc. will be responsible for removing all of their personal property. Any property left after required removal deadlines will be considered abandoned.

Frequently Asked Questions

The permittees built up their sites to protect their property values. Why is this being taken away?

The property value a permittee has at Lake Berryessa is their personal trailer/mobile home, deck, shed, etc. and excludes the Federal land upon which this property sits. The permittee still owns their personal property and any value attached to it.

The permittees' site rental agreements indicate they should get a 1-year notice before having to vacate their assigned sites. Could that be changed to a shorter timeframe?

The 1-year timeframe is for normal planned conditions (i.e., determination to use the area for some other purpose). In the case of violations of law, environmental violations, an emergency, or the unanticipated closure of an area because of concessionaire failures (Sec. C.6. of the contract between Reclamation and Concessionaire), the timeframe can be much shorter and the termination of use immediate.

Should permittees try to sell their trailers?

Reclamation is unable to advise the permittees on this matter except to say that the current concession contracts expire in 2008/2009, and once the contracts expire, so do the permittees' rental agreements. If a permittee decides to sell, they are required to notify a potential buyer that use of the site is on a month-to-month basis. Potential buyers are required to sign a disclosure statement at the Reclamation office.

Who can I contact for additional information?

Visitor Services Plan – Pete Lucero, 707-966-2111, plucero@mp.usbr.gov

Transition Services – Karen Wagner, 707-966-2111, kwagner@mp.usbr.gov

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